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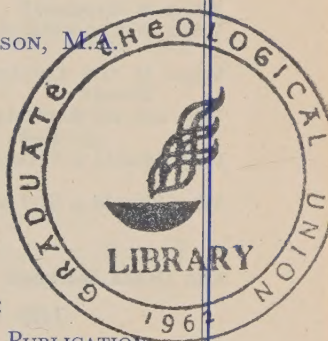
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A Baptist Catechism

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE

PREPARED BY
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From the Publishers of this Booklet

Questions and Answers for Young People

I.—OUR HUMAN NATURE.

1.—What is Man ?

A being who feels, thinks and purposes.

2.—What is meant by man being made “ in the image of God ” ?

That God Who created him is also a Being Who feels, thinks and purposes—Eternal Love, Mind and Will. (Genesis i. 26, 27.)

3.—What is the chief end of human life ?

To glorify God our Maker, and to comfort and help our fellow-creatures. (Isaiah xliii. 7 : Ephesians ii. 10.)

II.—OUR GUIDE BOOK.

4.—Who is our Teacher ?

Our Lord Jesus Christ. (John vi. 68.)

5.—Where is His teaching to be found ?

In the New Testament. (Matthew v. 2 : vii. 28, 29.)

6.—What is the Bible ?

A collection of writings by men inspired (inbreathed) by God. In it we find the Word of God. (Hebrews i. 1, 2 : 2 Timothy iii. 16.)

7.—Why is the Bible arranged in two parts ?

Because the Old Testament was written before, and the New Testament after, Christ came. Across the Old Testament is written "He is coming!": across the New Testament, "He is come!" (Romans xv. 4: 1 Corinthians x. 11.)

8.—Why are the two parts called Testaments ?

The word "Testament" may be rendered "Covenant". The Old Testament tells the story of God's Covenant with the Chosen Race, and of His dealings with them, to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ. The New Testament tells the story of God's covenant with all men, sealed in the redeeming Life, Work, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Psalm ciii. 7: 2 Timothy iii. 15: 1 Peter i. 11, 12: John vii. 39.)

9.—What is the central message of the Bible ?

"That God so loved the World that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

III.—GOD THE FATHER.

10.—How can we know God ?

Through the Design, Power and Beauty of the Universe He has created: through His purposes revealed in Human Life and His-

tory : through the Bible : above all through His unveiling in the Person of Jesus Christ. (Psalm viii. : Psalm xix. : Hebrews i. 1, 2.)

11.—What is the nature of God ?

God is Spirit, Father, Love—all-Holy, all-Righteous, all-Wise, and all-Merciful. (John iv. 24 : Matthew xix. 26 : 1 John i. 9 : iv. 8.)

12.—Is God the Father of all men ?

Yes, because all are made “in His image,” but only by obedience to His Holy Rule is true sonship fulfilled. (Romans viii. 14-16.)

IV.—GOD THE SON.

13.—Why is Jesus called the Son of God ?

Because in Him alone, the only begotten of the Father, God fully revealed His Love and Power in the saving of men. (Hebrews i. 2-5 : John i. 1-12.)

14.—Why is Jesus called the Son of Man ?

The title has value for us because it tells us that in Him alone manhood reached perfection, after the original pattern intended by God when He made man in His Own image. (Hebrews iv. 15 : John xix. 5.)

15.—By what name did the early Christians call Him ?

The Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians i. 3.)

16.—Why “ Lord ” ?

The early Christians regarded Him as exalted at God's right hand above all power and might and dominion. For them He was Lord of the Christian life in all its thoughts and deeds. (Ephesians i. 20, 21 : Philipians ii. 10.)

17.—Why “ Jesus ” ?

Because it was the name given Him at birth and meant Saviour. (Matthew i. 21.)

18.—Why “ Christ ” ?

“ Christ ” means the Anointed One, known as “ Messiah ” by the Jews—God's Servant sent to establish the Kingdom of His Love. (Matthew xvi. 16.)

V.—GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT.

19.—What does the Bible teach about the Holy Spirit ?

To describe God as Spirit is to draw attention to His activity, both in creation and inspiration. The Old Testament declares that all noble achievement is due to the working of the Divine Spirit. The New Testament teaches that we can only live the good life through the Spirit working in us. Our Lord described the Holy Spirit as the Comforter—the Strengtheners. (1 Corinthians iii. 6 : Romans viii. 9 : Matthew xxviii. 19 : John xiv. 17.)

20.—What is the work of the Holy Spirit ?

To rouse and quicken the Conscience, to awaken the Soul to Beauty, Truth and Goodness, and to change the heart by delivering it from the power of darkness. (John xiv. 26 : xvi. 7-11.)

21.—Why do we need His help ?

Because we are spiritually without strength and the good which we would we do not, but the evil which we would not, that we do. (Romans vii. 15-21.)

22.—Why does the World need Him ?

Because it will always be a scene of sin and hatred and strife until in men's hearts the Love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit. (Romans v. 5 : Ephesians iv. 2, 3.)

VI.—OUR LIFE AND CONDUCT.

23.—What is the difference between a good life and a bad life ?

The good life is lived in obedience and the bad life in disobedience to or neglect of the Holy Will of God. (Isaiah i. 2 : John iii. 4.)

24.—What is such disobedience called ?

Sin. (Romans v. 19 : Ephesians ii. 1-3.)

25.—Who are guilty of sin ?

All men. (Isaiah liii. 6.)

26.—Is every one guilty of Crime ?

No. Crime is an outward manifestation of Sin, punishable by the Law of the land : Sin is the inward rebellion of the heart against the Law of God, and though it may not result in Crime it is as terrible in God's eyes. (1 Timothy v. 24.)

27.—What are Sin's consequences ?

Sin shuts out from God our Father's companionship, and shuts the soul into its unhappy self : it blunts the finer feelings : in the end it brings misery to the sinner and woe to the world. (Isaiah lix. 2.)

28.—Can we be saved from Sin ?

Not to escape all its consequences. But to be cleansed from its guilt and delivered from its power, and thus restored to the fellowship of God, assuredly. (Matthew ix. 6.)

29.—What must I do to be saved ?

I must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Truly repenting of my evil, I must in humble and grateful love take from His hand the forgiveness He brings, surrender my will to His control, and earnestly strive to keep close to His Mind and Spirit. (Acts xvi. 30-34.)

30.—What does believing in Christ mean ?

It means that I accept what He came to teach, and the gift of God's love He came to bring, for He loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians ii. 20.)

VII.—THE WAY OF A DISCIPLE.

31.—What are the marks of a Disciple ?

To trust : to learn : to obey. (Matthew xi. 28, 29 : John xv. 14 : xxi. 19 : xiv. 23 : Colossians i. 10.)

32.—How do we learn ?

By Bible reading and Prayer, and obedience to the Will of God. (2 Timothy iii. 15, 16 : Philippians iv. 6.)

33.—What is Prayer ?

Sharing our inmost life of thought, feeling and purpose with God. (Matthew vi. 6.)

34.—How is Prayer answered ?

God answers Prayer by bestowing good gifts ; not necessarily giving what we ask, but always what we need. (Matthew vii. 11.)

35.—What part does obedience play ?

Christ cannot teach us if we do not obey Him. Every obedience makes the next lesson easier. To learn His Will we have to do His will : and as we do it we get to know it better. (John vii. 17.)

VIII.—THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

36.—What duty do we owe to our fellow Disciples ?

To unite with them. (Acts ii. 1 : iv. 32.)

37.—What ends are served by uniting ?

The ends of Fellowship and Service. (Philippians iv. 2, 3.)

38.—What do we call a union of Christian Disciples for these ends ?

A Church.

39.—What is the mark of a Church ?

Jesus Christ is in the midst of those who unite in His Name. (Matthew xviii. 20.)

40.—What are the chief ends of a Church ?

To worship God : to help its members to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ : to make disciples, and further God's work in the world. (Acts ii. 43-47.)

IX.—CHURCH ORDER.

41.—What is the difference between a Church and a Congregation ?

A Church is composed only of those who confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour : a Congregation is the company of people met for worship, some of whom may not have so confessed Him. (Hebrews x. 19-22.)

42.—What qualifies for membership of the Church ?

Faith in obedience to Jesus Christ openly confessed before men. (Ephesians ii. 18-22.)

43.—What are the duties of Church Membership ?

To maintain fellowship with Christ and with His people : regularly to attend the

appointed times for worship, for prayer, and for the business of the Work of God : to give money, time and service : continually to pray for the furtherance of the Church's witness : and to express the Will of God in all the affairs of life. (Hebrews x. 23-25 : 1 Corinthians xvi. 1, 2.)

44.—Who governs the Church ?

Jesus Christ. (Ephesians i. 22.)

45.—Through whom does He govern ?

Through the members of the Church, which Scripture calls His Body. (Ephesians iv. 11, 12.)

46.—What are the Office-bearers in a Baptist Church usually called ?

Pastors and Deacons.

47.—What is the work of a Pastor ?

Pastor means "Shepherd" : sometimes called "Minister," which means "Servant." He is called to the Ministry, first by God and afterwards by the Church, to do the holy work of guiding, teaching and comforting both young and old, and of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. (1 Timothy iv. 10-16.)

48.—Does the Pastor give his whole time to this work ?

As a rule, though there are business men who fulfil such a ministry. Such are called "Lay Pastors."

49.—What is the work of a Deacon ?

To arrange for the conduct of the business of the Church, to administer relief to poor members, and to help the Pastor in his work by keeping watch on the needs of the aged, the infirm, the lonely and the sick. (Acts vi. 1-3.)

50.—Why is a Baptist Church called a Free Church ?

Because it is a Society of believers under Christ's rule, and in that measure it is free from the rule of King, Bishop or Pope. It is also free to enter into association with other Churches, for purposes of fellowship and common action. (Matthew xxii. 21 : 1 Corinthians xvi. 19.)

51.—What is the relation of the Church to the State ?

Members of a Church owe duty to the State in civil affairs. In the relations of the Soul to God, the State has no authority. (Romans xiv. 4.)

52.—What is meant by the Baptist Denomination ?

The Baptist Denomination is the Union of Baptist Churches, Associations of Churches and Colleges, through which they agree to act together in matters of common concern.

53.—Are there other Denominations ?

Yes—Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and others. Followers of Jesus

Christ differ as to the best forms of Church government.

54.—Does this mean that there is no one Church of Jesus Christ ?

By no means. There is one holy, universal Church of God, embracing all denominations and constituted by those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. (Ephesians vi. 24.)

55.—What is the Kingdom of God ?

It is the fellowship of all who acknowledge Jesus as Lord. The Church is His appointed instrument by which His reign shall be extended. (Romans xiv. 17.)

X.—BAPTISM.

56.—What is the usual mark of admission to a Baptist Church ?

The Ordinance of Baptism.

57.—What is Baptism ?

Immersion in water on profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

58.—What is its meaning ?

The immersion is a sign that a dead self is being buried: the rising from the water is a sign of rising to a New Life. (Romans vi. 4-11.)

59.—Can infants be Baptised ?

Only in name, because they cannot exercise the repentance, faith and obedience which give true meaning to the rite.

60.—What is the value of Baptism ?

It proclaims and confirms the Disciple's surrender to his Lord : it pictures the Gospel truth that Jesus died for our sins and rose again : it makes clear that only the faith of the baptised person gives admission to the Church. By that faith the believing soul receives the gift of Divine grace. (Titus iii. 5-7 : 1 Peter iii. 21.)

XI.—THE LORD'S SUPPER.

61.—By whom was the Lord's Supper instituted ?

By our Lord on the night He was betrayed, when He met with His Disciples in the Upper Room. (1 Corinthians xi. 23-26.)

62.—With what end did He institute it ?

To keep fresh in the memory of His followers His death and its saving purpose.

63.—In what spirit should we come to the Lord's Supper ?

Deeply humble, because of our unworthiness, but thankful and hopeful because the broken bread and poured-out wine are the emblems of a Body that was broken and of a Love that was poured out to save us. (1 Corinthians xi. 27-32.)

64.—In what spirit should we leave the Lord's Table ?

Pledging anew our loyalty to our Lord.

65.—Is the Supper a Feast of Remembrance only ?

No. As a fellowship of the Church it means that we experience the spiritual presence of Christ. It is also a Feast of Hope. The Feast is to be kept "until He come," and points forward to the day of His power and great glory. It is also a Feast of dedication, for we make our vows to serve our Lord.

XII.—THE LIFE TO COME.

66.—What is Eternal Life ?

The life which comes through fellowship with Christ and which cannot be broken or interrupted by the death of the body. (John xvii. 3.)

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Baptist Principles and Believer's Baptism.

THE aim of this pamphlet is to set forth the principles which are implied and involved in Believer's Baptism. Historically, this service is related to the example of our Lord, and to the practice of the earliest Church. To explain its significance, reference must frequently be made to the New Testament. It also stands in the closest relation to conversion, to the building of Christian character, to the fellowship and life of the Church, and to the service of the Church, the Kingdom, and the community. There are seven principles that emerge, and they are set out under the following heads :

I. INDIVIDUAL FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

"At your own request and on confession of your repentance towards God, and of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ"—these are the words uttered by the celebrant immediately before he baptises a candidate. They stress the personal faith of the believer. Just as Jesus made His individual approach to John the Baptist (Matthew iii. 13-15), so each candidate must separately declare his personal faith. This may be done either in an interview, or by letter or by avowal before the Church meeting. Reports from visitors (appointed by the churches to wait on candidates) show again and again, that such faith has always been helped (or possibly hindered) by parents, friends, teachers, and

others; but whether a candidate can say "My father's God" or not, he or she must be able to say, "My God". Visitors, by the way, are not required to conduct an inquisition. Their mission is rather one of encouragement and spiritual fellowship. Nor are candidates called upon to face a theological examination. The inarticulate and the uneducated are in no way penalised. The only creed that Baptists have is an acted and dramatic creed. They make much of Romans vi. 4 and Colossians ii. 12, where the Apostle Paul describes baptism as a spiritual union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. Calvary is rehearsed again, and the candidate declares his evangelical theology by his symbolic actions. At the heart of his demonstrated faith is his experience of union with his crucified and risen Lord. The absence of verbal creeds does not mean in Baptist circles an absence of teaching; but it does help to produce something that has always been dear to Baptist hearts, namely, the spirit of toleration. Baptists have never been persecutors. Heresy hunts have been few and far between. Baptist interest in liberty has always been strong, and William Knibb in his fight against slavery in Jamaica is typical. Toleration of varieties of Christian experience and belief is not due to indifference, but is based upon a clear expectation that every new convert, taught by the Holy Spirit, will bring into the brotherhood a further revelation of the mind of Christ and the grace of God.

2. BELIEVER'S AND NOT ADULT BAPTISM.

There is no age qualification for baptism in Baptist churches. In America, quite young children are baptised on confession of faith. In England, the average minimum age is nearer sixteen. In all cases, the test is individual faith. Baptists practise, not adult baptism, but baptism of believers. This, in their view, at once disposes of the baptism of infants, for babies cannot possibly be baptised on the confession of their own faith. Baptists do not accept the view that the "household" of Lydia baptised along with herself (Acts xvi. 15) necessarily included children, and, in any case, baptism followed a declaration of faith after teaching. The same applies to the Philippian jailer (Acts xvi. 33) who, after Paul and Silas had spoken "the word of the Lord unto him and to all that were in his house," was baptised, "and all his". There is no ground here for believing that any infants in arms were baptised. It is to be noted also, that the members of the household of Stephanas recorded as being baptised by Paul (1 Cor. i. 16) are described (1 Cor. xvi. 15), as having "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints". Although Baptists reserve baptism for those who personally confess Christ, they do not neglect the children of Christian parents. There is a solemn and helpful service at which parents, in the presence of representatives of the Church, offer thanksgiving for God's lovely gift, and dedicate themselves to their high task and privilege. In this service, an expectation is aroused that,

coming to years of discretion and understanding, the child will declare itself a follower of the Lord Christ. Baptists are also enthusiastic in Sunday School work, and, year after year, candidates for baptism present themselves from the ranks of Sunday School scholars.

3. BELIEVER'S BAPTISM IS EVANGELISTIC.

A denomination which makes everything turn on personal faith will necessarily seek to foster it. Baptismal services themselves, with their far-reaching and impressive appeal, frequently produce evangelistic results; and it is an added joy to the candidate to know that his or her own confession has inspired others to a like declaration. As long as Believer's Baptism is practised, the Baptist denomination will be evangelical and evangelistic. The pioneer German Baptist, Oncken, had as his slogan, "Every Baptist a Missionary", and his expectation grounded itself on the great principle of the priesthood of all believers. Relevant texts are: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter ii. 5), and "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 9). If every church-member has a personal faith, it may be expected that, having something to proclaim, he will eagerly declare it in life and

character, witness and word. The warning given by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians i. 17 must, of course, always be borne in mind, "For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel". In other words, our concern must be to present our message that baptism is not a separated objective and therefore merely ritualistic, but rather the seal and sign of conversion and faith. Baptists have produced many great preachers. Robert Hall, C. H. Spurgeon, and Alexander Maclaren were Baptists; and it was a Baptist, William Carey, who in 1792 founded modern overseas missions. Baptists as Baptists are missionary-hearted and evangelical.

4. A SYMBOL OF MORAL CLEANSING.

Baptism by immersion is a far more emphatic symbol of cleansing than is sprinkling or pouring. The candidate is required to testify that the central moral problem of his or her life has been solved by Jesus Christ, both in principle and in fact. Baptism is "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts ii. 38). Repentance has been met by forgiveness, and peace has begun to guard the heart. But baptism by immersion is susceptible of a far more profound symbolism than that of external washing. Through spiritual union with Christ (Romans vi. 1-6 and Colossians ii. 12), the believer in his baptism is symbolically crucified, buried, and risen with Christ. It would be impossible to imagine a richer symbolism. It is not the water that

produces these tremendous moral changes. Baptism is a thanksgiving service for changes that have already begun to show themselves. Nevertheless, Believer's Baptism may in itself be, and often is, a profoundly moving spiritual experience, not only for those who witness it, but most particularly for the candidates. It was in the concluding moments of His own baptism that the Holy Spirit, like a dove, descended upon our Lord; and many candidates, rapt and uplifted, have known, while still in the water, the gentle entry of the indwelling Spirit, and have heard a voice which said, "My beloved son", "My beloved daughter".

5. GATEWAY TO CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP.

Believer's Baptism is very individual, but it leads to something corporate. It is an initiation service (along with receiving the right hand of fellowship at the Communion service) into the membership of the Church. A Baptist Church is a gathered Church, and it finds its charter in the words of our Lord: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew xviii. 20). Its members are "hand-picked," and personal faith is the necessary condition. Baptist church-members are spokes in the wheel whose hub is Jesus; i.e. their relationships with one another arise from their central relationship to Him. This is "the tie that binds" as sung by John Fawcett of Wainsgate, Hebden Bridge, in 1772. Characteristic features of Baptist

Church life include a sense of fellowship which finds its sublimest expression in the Communion service. Baptists are deeply aware of the close relationship between Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Each dramatically symbolises, the one with water, and the other with broken bread and poured out wine, the death, burial and resurrection of our Saviour. Each gains its significance from its historical connection with our Lord Himself, and from the faith that the Risen Christ is present, both in the baptismal pool, and at the table, and that, in a tender act of grace, He unites the believer with Himself. A Baptist church is democratic in its human process, but it cannot adequately and correctly be described as a democracy, for Christ is its Head. Theocracy would be a better description, although, in the seventeenth century, small communities of Baptists and Independents helped to teach England democratic theory and practice. The church meeting in Baptist churches is the final and responsible court of decision and appeal, but only, as the Baptist Union Constitution has it, "under the guidance of the Holy Spirit". The basic principle of "the priesthood of all believers" has prevented the ministry from being sacerdotalised, and the emphasis in Ephesians iv. 11-13 and I Corinthians xii. 28, upon gifts and not status has checked the professionalising of the Baptist ministry.

6. ENTRY TO FELLOWSHIP.

Baptist fellowship is international and world-wide, and its organ is the Baptist World Alliance with over eleven million members. The continental work of British and American Baptists in Europe has been a magnificent demonstration of fellowship in recent years. The great Congresses of which the one at Atlanta, Georgia, America in 1939 was the most recent, have each of them had strong international support. There is, however, far too much local independence of one Baptist church of another. Independence has become, in too many cases, a mere fetish, and a thing in itself. The freedom that is often championed is a freedom, not to obey the uniting Spirit of God, but to die! It is tragic if a candidate for baptism and church-membership is taught to believe that his entry to membership is only to the membership of one particular local church, and not to the Baptist fellowship as a whole, and, as a matter of spiritual fact, to the universal Church. In recent years, thanks to the late Dr. J. H. Shakespeare and other great leaders, the Denomination has been developing a closer organisation and this process will doubtless be accelerated. There are, of course, many difficulties and prejudices, but economic pressure, and the challenge of modern paganism as well as the deepest Christian impulses, are powerful and compelling. Baptists have a good record in inter-denominational activities, and are accustomed to take a leading part in local

and national Free Church Councils, Sunday School Unions, and Christian Endeavour work. At the same time they have been shy of re-unionism. The Baptist Union Council has again and again declared for Federation as against Reunion. The formation of the new Federal Free Church Council and of the new World Council of Churches, officially supported, as both of them are, by the Denomination, is greatly to be welcomed. Candidates for baptism should realise with imagination and courage that they are entering the universal fellowship of Christians; a fellowship which has sprung to new reality and expression in these dreadful days of menace and of war.

7. DEDICATION TO SERVICE.

The "rising to newness of life" which baptism so powerfully symbolises, involves dedication. Baptism is a sacrament, i.e. a "sacramentum", a word the Romans used to indicate a soldier's vow to the Emperor for military service. In the ceremony of baptism, of course, the declaration of allegiance is to Jesus Christ, and to the cause for which He lived, died, and rose again. Service to Christ as Lord has two references. First, within the Church, where each church-member should seek to exercise his or her gifts in some office or society or group; and second, outside the Church, in the home, at work, in social life, and in political and other affairs. To work within the Church is to help to build Christ's Body from within (Ephesians iv. 12 and Colossians i. 18, and

to work outside the Church is to help to make Christ's Body the agent of the coming of His Kingdom. There are signs that the spirit of Robert Hall and John Clifford is not dead, and Baptists, especially many younger people, are concerning themselves deeply and practically with the problems and duty of Christian citizenship. The faith they cherish so dearly holds the key, so they urgently believe, to the whole situation, individual and social, educational, industrial and political. "The newness of life" to which they have risen through the power of the Holy Spirit is itself life in a new era and a new world. This is not to say that the original and characteristic Baptist emphasis on piety, the life that is "hid with Christ in God", is being displaced, nor does it mean that Baptist Puritanism with its passionate interest in character is being weakened or destroyed. Let Baptists be pious in reference to the life of their soul; apocalyptist in their hope of divine deliverance, and pioneers and crusaders in the daily battle, on all fronts, for the Kingdom of God.

Believer's Baptism, therefore, has deep significance and many implications. At one point or another, it illustrates almost every side of the gospel. It witnesses to and demands individual faith, while, at the same time, it emphasises the faith of the corporate body, the Church. By its stress on newness of life in experience, relationships, and service, it challenges all who witness it, and, by its procedure, it recalls the baptism of our Lord Himself.

Need I be Baptised?

By
JOHN CLIFFORD,
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From the Publishers of this Booklet

Need I be Baptised?

I.

“**M**AY I not go to heaven without baptism? Why should I not? Christ Himself said, ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.’ I am a believer, why need I be baptised? Baptism is not necessary to salvation—is it?”

Of course it is not. We are saved by faith, not by baptism. Believing on the Lord Jesus—that is life: life here and life hereafter. Baptism is not necessary to salvation; nor is entire sanctification, conspicuous heroism of life, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, daily study of the Word of God, incessant beneficence, and fervent devotion. You may get to heaven without any of these, may you not?

Indeed, for aught I know to the contrary, you may. You *may* die a malefactor's death, and in the last moments of your agony breathe the prayer of penitence and faith, and enter forthwith into the paradise of God. In one case at least, it seems, a man did go to heaven without doing a single good deed, without securing any grace of character or rendering any service in the salvation of others. The "penitent thief" was not baptised: he did not go through a church to paradise; he did not perform a single "good deed," except in so far as "faith" and "prayer" and "penitence" are "good deeds." Thief though he was, and crucified as a malefactor, he trustingly prayed to Christ and was saved. "He that believeth on Christ Jesus is not condemned." God is not a hard master. He says "Come ye to the waters of salvation; buy and eat, without money and without price." His marvellous and manifold salvation is

perfectly and uniquely gratuitous. You can have it for nothing! You need not, certainly you need not, be baptised in order to be saved.

But if that is the miserable spirit in which you seek God's salvation, I must say that you run fearful and awful risk of not getting it. Poor shrunken and shrivelled soul, care you for nothing else than to live according to your own low desires here, and then squeeze into heaven at last? Is that all you want—to get into heaven, and to get there with the ignoble distinction that you did the *least* you could for Christ and for men? Is it in that cold and hard spirit you meet the commandments of the Lord who died for you? In effect, if not in words, the Leader and Example of all souls adopted the language of the Baptist, and said, I HAVE NEED TO BE BAPTISED. Yet He was not sinful. Baptism was not necessary to save Him; but it became Him, it was fitting, that He

should be baptised that “ He might fulfil all righteousness.” “ If any man have not the spirit of Christ ”—the spirit which pants and longs to fulfil all righteousness and obey every known law of God—“ he is none of His.”

“ Need I be baptised? ” is not the language of the believers in Christ on the day of Pentecost. Pardoned and glad, they obeyed the Lord at once. They shrank from no duty. Duty! Not so did they regard it; but leapt up to the height of the privilege, and were baptised forthwith, even to the number of 3,000 souls. Not the faintest whisper of reluctance is heard from the people of Samaria; but believing in the Lord Jesus, they are baptised straight away. The Treasurer of Candace does not say “ Need I be baptised? ” nor Saul of Tarsus, nor Cornelius, nor Lydia and her household, nor the jailor at Philippi, nor Crispus—they do not tarry in Doubting Castle; but they arise and

are baptised as if they delighted to obey their new King and bear witness to His grace and power.

That is the *spirit* in which we should go to our baptism—as a happy bride to her wedding, as a devoted student to his books, as a prince to his long-expected throne. To come with sluggish and reluctant step, constrained not by the sweet love of our Lord, but by a strong sense of duty or deference to a supposed arbitrary order; and only after numerous wriggles and violent contortions to get out of the pincers of Scriptural logic; this is to rob baptism of all its beauty, and take out of the act all its grace. We should say—not “need I?” but “Why do you *hinder* me from being baptised into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?”

II.

“But need I be baptised—i.e., *dipped*, overwhelmed or plunged in water?”

“Why will not sprinkling, or pouring a few drops on the forehead suffice? The value of the act is not in the abundance of the water. It is merely a form, and a little will do as well as a great deal. A thin ring answers as well as a thick one at the marriage ceremony.”

No doubt anything or nothing will do if Christ has so ordered it. But if it be a COMMAND at all, it should, of course, be obeyed in the way in which the King Himself prescribes. Good subjects obey laws: they do not change and adapt them to what *they* like. If the law says I must pay in a gold or paper currency, it is not for me to substitute cowrie shells, or bars of iron.

Now Christ has not appointed sprinkling or pouring, but IMMERSING. No scholar whose reputation is worth a fig

will deny that. The gospel baptisms were in RIVERS. Jesus was baptised in Jordan, and that is neither a basin nor a font, but the chief river of Palestine. John the Baptist went to Ænon to baptise, because there was plenty of water there. The administrators went down into the water, and came up out of it; and, as men of sense, they would not have done that when a few drops of water in a leathern bottle would have answered equally well. Paul declares that the *object* of baptism is to show forth the burial and the resurrection of Christ. We do not leave the dead on the ground and sprinkle a little earth upon them—they are put into a grave.

Sense and Scripture and scholarship agree in saying that there is no New Testament baptism save where there is a dipping, an actual immersion.

III.

“But why need we baptise, or pour, or sprinkle? This is the dispensation of the Spirit. We are not under carnal laws and ordinances now, but under Grace. Circumcision avails nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”

So say the Friends or Quakers; and with a consistency which does them credit, they abolish ordinances altogether. They have no preaching ordinance, or praying ordinance. Praise is not an ordinance, nor is the reading of the Scriptures, nor is the Lord's Supper. Every one is free; all are free. They meet and are silent or not according to the monitions of the Spirit. Subordinative of the external is totally accomplished. There is a visible building, and there are visible men and women; but no fixed arrangements for preaching or for audible song or prayer; no Lord's Supper, and accordingly, no baptism.

But, mark, though this is the dispensation of the Spirit, yet Christ's command about baptism was given just before the dispensation dawned, and *was, in fact, sanctioned by the promise of His presence in the power of the Spirit.* True; He made disciples and they were baptised before His resurrection; but in the commandments He delivered after His return baptism has a fixed place. And the very men who had the *baptism of the Holy Ghost*, in its glorious fulness, both preached baptism in water, and administered it, and did not surrender it, even when it was misused. Christ Jesus, to whom the Spirit was given without measure, said, "It becomes Me to be baptised in order to fulfil all righteousness" ; and Peter distinctly proclaimed that the indwelling of the Holy Ghost was a reason for baptism in water and not a reason against it, when he said, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised, who

have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" God Himself says, in Ezekiel, that the gift of the Spirit is intended to issue in obedience to all His laws. "I will give them a new spirit, and I will take away the heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances and do them." Compare also Matt. vii. 17, 27, Rev. xxii. 12, 15.

IV.

"But I was baptised when I was an infant: will not that suffice?" Not if *you* are really to attend to the Lord's will in the precise way in which He directs.

For, first of all, the act itself was not according to the New Testament pattern; it was a sprinkling and not an immersion.

Secondly, the place of the act in your life was not according to the divine order. The direction is—make

disciples, and then baptise ; believe, and then be baptised. We have no warrant to change the relationship, any more than we have, according to the laws of England, to marry actual infants, or to sign contracts before we write them.

Moreover, the act, whatever it was, and whenever it came, was not your own, and cannot in any way be regarded as your obedience to the will of the Lord Jesus. The vaccination of a babe is not the babe's obedience. It submits because it cannot help it. Nor was your " baptism " your homage to Christ. You could not help it.

If, then, you have any felt craving after personal and full obedience to the commands of Christ ; if you experience any deep desire to seize any opportunity of attesting your homage and devotion to Jesus Christ ; if you wish, with a blameless fidelity, to do ALL you can, and not as little as you can, to show your love to Him Who gives Himself to you,

you will say at once, “ I need to be baptised—not that I may be saved, but because I am saved, and delight in every occasion of imitating Christ’s example and doing His bidding ” ; and you will find your baptism an occasion of fortified faith, deepened devotion, and holy joy in Christ Jesus the Lord of your new life.

THE BAPTIST A. B. C.

By
W. G. BRANCH

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THE BAPTIST "A.B.C."



BAPTISTS sometimes glory in the fact that they are not bound by any creed, and do not subscribe to any theological formula. They are a fellowship of Christian people who are free to read the New Testament for themselves, and to interpret it as the Divine Spirit may guide them. That is true; but it is also true that each year the Baptist Handbook prints what it calls a "Declaration of Principle," upon which the Baptist Union is based. This Declaration may fitly be called "The Baptist A.B.C.", for it describes in order our Authority, our Badge, and our Commission.

OUR AUTHORITY IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Most other Churches would, of course, make the same claim, and we should readily agree that, in the final analysis, this was true. But other Churches are more or less cumbered with other authorities who are bound to dilute, and to some extent to divert, the supreme authority of Jesus Christ.

To the Roman Catholic, the Pope is the Head of the Church on earth. He is the Viceregent of Christ. His is the power to issue infallible decrees and to exercise binding

authority over the members of his communion. The edicts that are issued under the Papal authority go far to regulate and control the belief and the conduct of those who belong to the Church of Rome. The authority of the Pope is very real.

To the Anglican, the King is the Head of the Church. Under Henry VIII. and his immediate successors this Royal supremacy was absolute. To-day it is exercised through Parliament. Hence the Book of Common Prayer, which is part of an Act of Parliament, can only be altered by Parliament acting in the name of the King.

Some of the Free Churches are more or less subject to the authority of tradition, especially in regard to the practice of infant baptism. This practice is held to be of great antiquity and therefore it is considered desirable to perpetuate it, even though it is destitute of Scriptural authority.

Baptists, however, stand clear of all these lesser authorities, fearing that they may come, in time, to challenge the ultimate and supreme Authority. "The Lord Jesus Christ," says our Declaration of Principle, "is the sole and absolute Authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures." We stand for what our fathers called "The Crown Rights of the Redeemer." In the realm of spiritual affairs and matters of conscience we recognise no authority but that of Jesus Christ Himself. We are concerned that "in all things, He may have the pre-eminence"; not the State, not the Church

is an ecclesiastical organisation, not an arbitrary priesthood, not a formal creed, but the risen and living Christ. He is our "sole and absolute Authority in matters of faith and practice."

OUR BADGE IS BELIEVERS' BAPTISM,

with the emphasis upon the word "believers'." Practically all Christian Churches claim to baptise, but ours is the claim to baptise **believers only**.

"Christian baptism," says the Declaration of Principle, "is the immersion in water . . . of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

We make such immersion our Badge, because it is the only form of baptism that we find in the New Testament. So far as the Christian Church is concerned, its only authority for adopting the practice of baptism is derived from the New Testament. If it be said that the Church practised baptism before the New Testament was written, it is sufficient to reply that by the time it *was* written no other form of baptism had emerged, for the baptism of believers by immersion is emphatically the only form that is there recognised or enjoined.

It is sometimes said that, while Baptists have no formal creed, their ordinance of baptism is a creed in itself. And so it is, for it commits us to at least two fundamental positions. First of all, it asserts the necessity for personal conversion on the part of the

person baptised: "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." No other consideration has a right to enter here. For what other reason should a person be baptised? In the view of the New Testament baptism is the badge of Christian discipleship or it is nothing; and Christian discipleship or necessity involves a personal act of surrender to Jesus Christ as the great Lord and Master. Hence we can find no ground for any form of baptism but that of avowed believers.

In the second place, our observance of the ordinance commits us to a belief in the purely spiritual character of the Christian Church. According to our reading of the New Testament, none have a right to membership in the Church except those who are the avowed disciples of Jesus Christ. People cannot really become members of that Church on any social grounds, or as the result of a ceremony by whatsoever name it may be called or by whomsoever it may be performed.

Our Authority is the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Badge is Believers' Baptism.

OUR COMMISSION

is also set out in the Declaration of Principle: "It is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world." These are our marching orders. This is our individual and our collective task. If we are to be "personal witnesses," then as individuals we must have experienced, or witnessed, something. What

that "something" is has already been indicated. It is the saving grace and power of Jesus Christ made evident in our own experience. We have seen it, we have witnessed it for ourselves. And then we are to bear our witness by telling others of what we have seen and experienced, and by pointing them to the same Source of hope and peace. This was what happened continually in the early days of the Christian Church, according to the story told in the Acts of the Apostles. People saw in Jesus their Saviour, and then they told others of their great discovery. Like John the Baptist, they looked upon Jesus, and then said, "Look!" They saw, and then they proclaimed. They witnessed, and then they bore their witness. And so the story spread, and disciples were made and the Church grew. Truly the Discipleship Campaign is no new thing. It is as old as the Acts of the Apostles. It is inherent in the very nature of the Christian Church. Certainly to us as Baptists who recognise as our sole Authority the Lord Jesus Christ, and who adopt as our Badge the ordinance of believers' baptism, this Commission to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to help in the evangelisation of the world is imperative. Nay, it is vital. If we respond to it with all our heart, we shall increase and abound. If we disregard it we shall not only cease to live but we shall forfeit the only reason why we should continue to live.

SHOULD
- A -
FELLOW
PRAY
?



ONE PENNY

TO
REV. M. E. AUBREY, C.H., M.A.,
IN DEEP GRATITUDE FOR HIS KINDLY
AND UNFAILING HELP IN SUGGESTIONS
ABOUT THESE BOOKLETS

AND
TO
REV. W. ROWLAND JONES, B.A.,
formerly my minister at
Upton Baptist Chapel, Lambeth,
I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE THIS
LITTLE BOOKLET.

SHOULD A FELLOW PRAY ?

By

ARNOLD CLARK,
Captain, 3rd London Company
THE BOYS' BRIGADE
(Upton Chapel, Lambeth),

author of

"Why should a Fellow be Baptized?"

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Should a Fellow Pray?

WHY?

HOW?

WHEN?

WHERE?

FIRST of all, WHY should a fellow pray? Well, to put it quite bluntly, because he is an utter fool if he does not. That slipped off my pen, and I leave it there, even though at first sight it may seem irreverent. It is so absolutely true, and puts the case in a nut-shell. After all, a fellow *is* a fool if he allows himself to starve within reach of the food he is too lazy to take the trouble to get—and it is every bit as stupid to starve your real self—your own personality—as it is to starve your body.

Your body does need food, but your body is only the house in which you yourself live; and when the body is buried in the ground, you yourself will still be alive.

You have never been seen by anyone, nor could you see me, even if you were looking at me—you would see only the house I live in. “We do not live to eat, we eat to live,” is quite true of our bodies, and “we pray to live” is just as true about our real selves, the part of us which is “I,” and which will live for ever. Prayer is Life and Power and Happiness, and because it is all these things no fellow can afford to be without it.

Prayer is *Life*. Just as your body needs air, or a fish needs water, so you need prayer. Your inner life would be suffocated apart from prayer.

Prayer is *Power*. A battery loses its life and power if it is not from time to time in touch with the main electric supply, a tramcar goes “dead” the moment its trolley comes off the live wire—and so do we ourselves become “dead” if we lose that touch with God which comes to us through the power of prayer. John Bunyan, in

the *Pilgrim's Progress*, tells us how Christian, while shut up in the dungeons of Doubting Castle with his friend Hopeful, completely forgot that he had a key in his pocket which would open any door. And he remained a prisoner until he remembered it!

That sometimes happens with us. We get into all kinds of trouble, and wonder how we are going to get out of it, when all the time we have the wonderful power of prayer, ready at hand to use. Has that ever happened to you?

Jesus Himself felt the need of prayer. He attended public worship in His own native town, He prayed before attempting to raise Lazarus, He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, in fact He never undertook any action at all without first praying about it. He went right away by Himself to be alone with God, sometimes for a whole night. He prayed just because He must.

And if *He* needed it, how much

more do you and I! Just think of our constant need for forgiveness, and the help we need in our frequent fights with temptation. Think of your own daily struggle at school, or in your office or workshop, perhaps even at home. Surely it is madness to try to do without it!

And prayer is *Happiness*. Don't think that a soft thing to say. Of course I do not mean it is a smug, pious, self-content; but a happy delightful pleasure. Nothing pleased the twelve disciples more than being with Jesus, and they were just twelve ordinary people such as you and I are. So many fellows fight shy of prayer, perhaps because they think of it as being a lot of long and meaningless expressions, and they are half ashamed of it,—and what it *really* is has never occurred to them; they have never grasped the fact that it is actually speaking to Jesus Christ.

Make prayer your very own; you need it and you ought to have

it. We all have difficulties to face, wretched thoughts come into our minds and are not easy to get rid of. Like Paul, we find we do the things we hate ourselves for doing, and yet we go on doing them. In such cases prayer can help very much. Put as much force into your prayer as you do into your struggle to keep your manhood clean, and you will be surprised by the strength you receive.

But prayer is more than asking. It is giving as well. Each of us should express thanks and praise to God for all His goodness to us. We receive many things we do not deserve and have perhaps never even asked for. Think of your parents, home, relatives, friends; of health, strength and freedom.

Nothing could sting Jesus more than ingratitude, and when one of the ten lepers He had healed returned to thank Him, He at once asked where the other nine were. Do you ever thank Him "for the beauty of the earth, for

the glory of the skies, for the love that from our birth, over and around us lies " ?

And now we come to three tremendously important questions—HOW, WHEN and WHERE should a fellow pray? We cannot be too careful how we answer these three points.

HOW? Well, in a common-sense manner. Jesus spoke very severely about "vain repetitions," and in His parable contrasted the long-winded Pharisee very unfavourably with the sin-stricken tax collector. Let me illustrate it in this way:—You have asked for a frank talk with someone you greatly respect—Father, Minister, Headmaster, Brigade Officer, Scout-master, or anyone else. You have a definite request to make, or you want advice in some special matter. Before seeing him, you think over beforehand what you want to say, and then when you meet him, you state the case as clearly as you can. You certainly

do not gabble through it with your mind far away, or your thoughts only half on what you are saying.

Apply that illustration. You are about to pray to our Father, or to Jesus Christ our Lord. Well, prepare your mind beforehand, approach reverently, and then state your case clearly, going straight to the point. And while being very reverent, be natural, and use your own words, thinking very carefully what you are saying. And the prayer will be as friendly as the frank talk. Jesus must have had many frank talks with those twelve disciples of His. That is just what your prayer is, and while you remember that you are talking to Him yourself, do not forget to be quiet for a little while so that He may speak to you through your inner consciousness.

WHEN? Whenever you feel the need—whenever you can. Prayer is in many ways an “acquired taste”—it grows upon us. Perhaps I am scared of speaking to

someone at first, until I get to know him better, and then I really love talking to him. So is our friendship with God, and our prayer is "as a man speaketh with his friend." Perhaps we can best answer "*When?*" by putting it the other way round. There is no time when we *cannot* pray to God, because *He* is not available. The bar is always on our side, not His.

WHERE? Wherever you are. You can pray walking along the street, in your own room, at work, in any sudden crisis—so long as your prayer is sincere, the place and time do not make any difference. *Attitude* does not matter. Convention tells us to kneel, and it is true that the attitude of the body may help that of the mind. Many Boys' Brigade Companies, for example, stand for prayer. But always the all-important thing is the attitude of your mind, and the closed eye is helpful too, because it shuts out from our

minds things that would distract our thoughts otherwise.

Time does not matter. Regularity is good, because it helps us to see that we do pray—but it is a great mistake to think that we can pray only at night, for example, or in Church.

Language does not matter. You need not hesitate to pray because you are unable to form or compose a prayer in words like those of the Prayer Book. That is what Jesus meant when He told His parable about the tax collector who could do nothing but beat his breast and sigh, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” We read in the Book of Genesis that in the wilderness Hagar’s boy cried, and that “God heard the voice of the lad.” I can thoroughly understand a fellow who realises he has come a very nasty cropper, being unable to express himself in words such as those of the “General Confession,” and being only able to say inwardly from the bottom of his heart,

"Oh God, *what* a fool I've been. Do please help me." Such a prayer "gets through" ; its absolute sincerity ensures that.

Length does not matter. Although Jesus Himself was sometimes in prayer all night, He did not encourage long prayers for the sake of being long. He spoke sadly about the Pharisees when He said "They think they shall be heard for their much speaking." The model prayer He gave His disciples—"The Lord's Prayer"—was very brief and very much to the point. A short sentence, sincerely meant, is worth a great deal more than a lot of words spoken without thought.

Speaking aloud does not matter. The old hymn says, "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered *or unexpressed*." Some of the very finest prayers are probably those never spoken aloud. The same hymn says, "Prayer is the burden of a sigh"—and I think that means that sometimes we pray without

realising we are doing so. The very greatness and depth of our longing make it a real prayer. The instinct and need for prayer is very deep-seated in every one of us, even though we do not know it.

“Saying prayers” may be a very different thing from *praying*.

I often say my prayers,
But do I ever pray,
And do the wishes of my heart
Go with the words I say?

Remember that, and be careful lest your habit of saying your prayers leads you away from the real thing. Pull yourself up the moment you find your thoughts wandering.

One last word. Sometimes God appears to take no notice, and our prayers seem unanswered. A little girl once prayed for a fine day for her Sunday School excursion. The day proved soaking wet, and a friend said to her, “God did not answer your prayer.” She at once

replied, 'He did answer, but He said "No."' We do not always ask for wise things, and you may live, as many have, including myself, to thank God that He did *not* answer our prayers as we wanted Him to.

Of course there are many other things that could be said, but space forbids.

If you are puzzled, go to someone you can thoroughly trust, who you are sure will understand, and tell him your difficulty. If prayer seems very difficult, remember that the very longing to pray, the deep-down desire for better things in your own heart, is in itself a prayer; and if you will but trust God, you will find He will answer you somehow in His own good time.

And as James the Apostle wrote, "If any of you needs wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men liberally and does not scold."

Here is a very beautiful prayer, with which I close,—

Oh Thou, by Whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way—
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod,
Lord teach us how to pray.

“Lord, I am only a young
fellow, teach ME how to pray.”

“TO BE
— OR —
NOT TO BE.”

“What ‘Decision’ really means for a
boy or a girl under sixteen
years of age.”

JAMES N. BRITTON.

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Rev. A. W. MacBeath, M.A., B.D.

Why Should a Fellow be Baptized?

Arnold S. Clark

Why Should a Girl be a Christian?

Mary B. Dunning

2d.

The Great Decision Dr. F. Townley Lord, B.A.

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Christian Baptism Dr. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A.

Why Should I be Baptized?

Dr. J. C. Carlile, C.H., C.B.E.

From the Publishers of this Booklet

“TO BE OR NOT TO BE.”

“What ‘Decision’ really means for a boy or girl under sixteen years of age.”

I SUPPOSE there is not the slightest need to tell any boy or girl reading this booklet that no one ever becomes a great athlete or a good scholar by mere accident. You never suddenly wake up and find that without any effort you have become a gymnast or a scholar. To succeed as either, demands, as you know, clear-cut decision, patient practice, and dogged determination. All careless drifting along has to cease, and we have to make up our minds to take things seriously in the gymnasium and the class room, or, better still, in both, for it is a fine thing to have a well trained mind in a well trained body. To fail to make this decision, to keep putting it off, to be lazy or indifferent about it, is simply to throw away our chances, and to make it all the harder afterwards. In athletics and in scholarship we are all agreed that the decision must be made, and the sooner it is made the better.

What I am afraid many of us are in danger of forgetting is that just as no one ever becomes an athlete and a scholar by accident, so no one ever, by accident, becomes a Christian. We forget that just as it is possible to be in a gymnasium and yet be no gymnast; or in a class and yet be no scholar, so it is possible to be living in a Christian home, or to be a member of a Sunday School class, or a regular attendant at Church on Sunday, and yet in no true sense be a Christian. Here, again, it seems to me, there must be the clear-cut decision, the patience in daily practice and the dogged determination to keep on. Drifting, leaving it to mere chance, won't do it. Just as in the life of the athlete or the scholar there was a time when they ceased to drift and began to take seriously the task set before them, so in the lives of us all there is a point at which we, too, take seriously all Jesus Christ means to us and set out to try and be the kind of men and women Jesus wants us to be. There is nothing accidental about it. Our decision should be just as deliberate in the one case as it is in the other.

I think, too, that these two decisions are in some ways very much alike. Supposing you have been attending gym-classes but have not been in the least interested, nor really trying to profit by

the instruction—many boys and girls do this, as you know—and then you suddenly make up your mind really to be an athlete, if you can, the very first thing that follows is a new place given to the *Instructor*. Up to that point you paid little or no heed to any instructions he gave or to any examples he set. You neither followed his instructions nor copied his example. But now all that is changed. You want to be the kind of boy or girl, he or she, wants to make you, and because you have made up your mind about that you now listen to what is said and try to carry it out, watch all that is done, and try your hardest to do it. It is quite true that *before* you made your decision you were supposed to do all this, but as you know very well it was only supposition. Now he has by your deliberate choice really become your master, your instructor and your example, and that makes all the difference. Well, it is just like that with Jesus. God sent Him to be our Great Teacher, our one Great Master in the big school of life. We have always been supposed to accept Him as such, but we have not done so *really*. We have not listened to His teaching nor have we closely followed His example. But if we make our decision for Him that is changed. We *want* to please Him, we want to follow His instructions, we want to copy His

example, we, by our own deliberate decision, make Him our Master and give Him full control of all we are, of all we do, or think or say.

There is another very good illustration of what decision means to be found in what happens when a boy or girl joins one of our Brigades or the Boy Scouts or Girl Guides. So long as you have not joined it does not matter very much to you what the leader says or does. You feel free, as a non-member, to do exactly as you please. But if you decide to join, then all that is altered. You are no longer free to do as you like. You are only free to do as he gives command. Your decision to join at once brings you under his control. That is what your decision to make Jesus the Captain of your life means. You are in His Company and it is up to you, as a good member, to be obedient to Him as the Captain of your salvation.

But there is an equally good illustration to be found in the New Testament. When Jesus came along Peter and John were busy about their own business. They were fishermen and were attending to their fishing. Then Jesus came and He said to them as He is saying to every one of us: "Follow Me." At once they dropped everything and followed Him. I do not suppose for a moment they knew

where He would lead them, or what He would ask them to do. They did not guess that He would enable one of them to write a Gospel, and the other to preach that wonderful sermon which was the means of adding three thousand to the Church. That is one of the fascinating things about deciding for Jesus. You never know where He will send you, what He will ask you to do. All you know is He will make more of your life somewhere, than you can make of it for yourself if you stay undecided where you are. It means securing every bit of the very highest and best of which you are capable, to deliberately make Him the Captain of your life.

As a matter of fact, to decide for Christ means a much bigger thing in many directions than it looks.

For instance, it means that everything in your life of which He disapproves must go. If in the gymnasium or the Brigade your leader says, "I want you to stop doing that; I know it is bad for you," or if he says, "I want you to stop doing or trying to do that in that way," there is only one thing for you to do, and that is to stop it. And you will, too, if you really like your leader, and want to please him. It is always easy to give up, or to do, for a leader you love. Of course, if you do not love him you won't find it

easy, nor will you stay very long in the company. It is just that loving and being loved that makes obedience easy. Jesus Himself pointed that out: "If ye love Me," He said, "ye will keep My commandments." And it is easy to love Him; for He loves us. There is not a boy or girl reading this now that cannot easily tell when anyone really and truly likes them. You know, and when you think at all of Jesus, you know He loves you. Why, He loved us all so much that He *died* for us, and He wants us in return to love Him enough to be obedient to Him. It is love of your great Leader which makes you willing to give up the most cherished things, willing to endure the hardest things, and willing to try the most difficult things. The boy or girl man or woman, who definitely hands over the full control of life, who so loves the Leader chosen as to be willing to give up everything He condemns, and attempt anything He commands, is the person who definitely and intelligently decides for Christ.

So far as I can see, there really is only one reason why any boy or girl should hesitate to make this decision, and that is lest, having made it, he or she should fail to live up to it. That is why in many cases there is hesitation. It is comparatively easy to make the decision, it is not

so easy to live life as it should be lived after the decision is made. Some men go so far as to think of all the things they would have to do if they were decided Christians, and of all the things they would have to leave undone, and are so sure of their own weakness that they refuse to make any decision at all. Others go further and *try* to do or not to do as if they were Christians, and, utterly failing, they give the whole business up. If this is your difficulty, I want you to come back with me to the boy in the gymnasium. He has made up his mind to take things seriously; to be as good a gymnast as he possibly can. But, though he has made this decision, that does not make him a perfect athlete all at once. He still makes mistakes, does the wrong thing, or does things in the wrong way. His decision has not made him perfect; but it has made him a real TRIER. He still has a lot to learn and, worse still, a lot to unlearn; the point is that in his decision he has made a *beginning*. That is what pleases the instructor, that is what gives the instructor the chance to help him, that is what in the end will bring him to perfection. More, so long as he is really trying, the instructor is neither cross nor angry, but patient and full of encouragement. You make a beginning and become a "trier," and you can leave the rest to Jesus.

But someone may say: Supposing I make such a decision, and supposing after becoming a real trier, I suddenly cease to try. Supposing I *deliberately* do the wrongs things, what then? When that happens there are only two courses open to you. You must either give up the whole business or go to your leader and say you are sorry and beg his *pardon*. But remember, when you come to *Jesus* to say you are sorry, you must be really sorry. We all know what would happen in school to the boy who kept on doing the wrong thing and saying he was sorry; no one would believe he was sorry, and when he apologised no one would believe in his apology. The only sorrow that is any use is the sorrow that is sorry enough to stop committing the offence. That kind of sorrow always receives pardon from Jesus. He forgives, and forgets, and begins again just where you left off. He knows when we are really trying, He stands ready to show us what to do, and to help us to do it. If after the decision we were left to our own resources, I am afraid none of us could live up to it, but with His help, His patience, His example, why, the very worst of us can do something to please Him, to follow His example and to carry out His commands. So that we can, without waiting to be perfect, just as we are now, make a beginning by making our decision, and we

can leave all the rest to Him, confident that He is so wonderful that in the end He will make us all He wants us to be.

If, then, you are clear what decision means, why not make the decision *now*? You can do it quite easily. Read over the following declaration:—

By the grace of God I acknowledge Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I now accept Him as the Captain of my life, and promise Him that in His strength I will strive to serve and follow Him.

Name

Address.....

.....

Date..... Age.....

If that is what you really mean, sign your name to show you mean it, and I am quite sure your Divine Captain will accept you as a follower of His. Then, having in this way signed on for Jesus, tell your parents, or your Sunday School teacher, or your minister, that you have done so, and I am sure they will do all in their power to help you.

What is the
Communion of Christ's
Body and Blood ?

1 Cor. x. 16.

A COMMUNION SERVICE ADDRESS

BY THE

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HOLY COMMUNION

“All our fathers were under the cloud; and all passed through the sea; and were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ. Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.”—1 COR. x. 1-5.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two sacraments of the Christian Church; the first symbolises the believer's death in sin, and his resurrection through union with Christ into newness of life: the second sets forth Christ's flesh and blood, received by faith, as the continual sustenance of the new life given.

In the above verses, two great events in Israel's history are referred to, as corresponding to these two sacraments. The people were baptised unto Moses; they went down into the bed of the sea, the cloud covered them, and Israel was buried as in a grave; they had died to the bondage and misery of the old Egyptian life, and now on the northern shore they rose again, a free people, to a life of communion with God; old things had passed away, all things had become new. And now God, who had called them into the new life, showed that He was prepared

to sustain them in it, and daily manna from heaven was given. "When the dew that lay was gone up, behold upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, and Moses said unto them: This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." Exodus xvi. 14. And referring to this as a type of Himself, our Lord says:—"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John vi. 51.

"They did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ." The rock of stone, out of which the water flowed when Moses struck it with his rod, was then but as a veil, hiding Him who was the true Rock of Israel. The Lord had said unto Moses: "Go on before the people and take thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river in thy hand, and behold, *I will stand before thee upon the rock*, and thou shalt smite the rock and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink." Exodus xvii. 5. That water came not from the dead dry stone, but from that unseen living presence of the God of Israel; and as the Lord Jesus is the divine agent by whom all things are made, and without whom is not anything made that is made, that element of water was His gift; by His own living presence and power in their midst, *He* had given them to drink. They

drank of that *spiritual rock* that followed them, and that rock WAS CHRIST.

This manna and water which they ate and drank, are called, "Spiritual meat and spiritual drink," because, coming thus direct from God through our Lord Jesus, these things should have been, and were intended to be, sacramental; impressing them with the thought of God's real presence in their midst. But they failed to look *beyond the emblems*; they saw the manna, yet forgot God their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt, and terrible things by the Red Sea; they saw the stone, but were blind to the spiritual presence behind the stone; and the object of the Apostle is, to show how this sacramental bread and water failed to profit them, because they were not moved by these things to seek and realise fellowship with the living God.

Thus we have, in the history of Israel, a deeply significant lesson as to the nature and true use of sacramental symbols, showing us how utterly valueless emblems are *in themselves* as means of spiritual grace. "They *all* ate the same spiritual meat, and did *all* drink the same spiritual drink. Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness." v. 5. *All* of them ate and drank the spiritual emblems; yet *most* of them, through their lusts, were destroyed in the wilderness, and failed to enter the promised land.

"Now these things were our examples," and the great lesson for us is, that if we

would not be overthrown by sin and miss our heavenly inheritance, then we must do what Israel failed to do ; we must learn to look beyond the mere emblems, to the Lord's living presence in our midst, discern our Spiritual Rock behind the visible rock, look through the bread and the wine, to discern in our midst Christ, the living bread.

For it is indeed of Himself, and of no inanimate emblem He speaks, when He says : "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves." John vi. 53.

The term "Flesh " here, is no doubt used by our Lord as a synonym for His perfect heavenly nature. "All flesh," says St. Paul, "is not the same flesh ; there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds."

As we look at any piece of flesh, we can tell to what kind of life and creature it belongs, whether to bird or beast or fish, because the nature of the various forms of life is manifested in their particular kind of flesh. The flesh of Christ, then, stands for *the nature* of Christ ; and to feed upon His flesh means, that we must be nourished in our spiritual being, by receiving into our souls, through faith, the heavenly nature of the Lord Jesus.

The blood is the symbol of life. "The life of the flesh is in the blood." Lev. xvii. 11. To drink the blood of Christ, means, to receive into our spirits, by faith, *the life* of the Lord Jesus. There are those who think

that in the sacrament we must eat and drink Christ's literal flesh and blood; there were those in His day who so mistook His meaning. "The Jews strove among themselves saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" John vi. 52. But twice in that same sixth chapter of John, does our Lord plainly teach, that it is not the eating and drinking of His literal flesh and blood of which we are to think; in verse 57 He says: "As the living Father sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me shall live by Me." We are to live by Christ, *as* He lived by the Father; the only possible explanation of these words is, that as Christ lived by being filled with the nature of God, so we must live spiritually by being filled with the nature of Jesus.

Again in verse 63, He says: "The flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you are spirit and life." So that even were it possible for us to eat the literal flesh of His human body, our Lord's own declaration is, that that would profit us nothing; to eat His corporeal human flesh could give no man a holy nature, and to drink His actual human blood could fill no man's soul with spiritual life; behind these symbols of bread and wine, we must look for the great spiritual realities of which they speak; that holy nature and spiritual life, which can proceed only from the living Saviour of men, and with which He is able and willing to fill all those who are united to Him by a living faith.

In our own bodies, the heart sends forth a continuous stream of living blood, which flows through the arteries and fills the veins of every member of the body, conveying life and strength to every part; it returns to the heart, to be there replenished and quickened, and is again sent forth in its health and life-giving course: so from the great heart of Christ, there flows into every member of His mystic body, the Church, a stream of spiritual life that conveys to their spirits, a holy, incorruptible and immortal life, the very life of Christ Himself; so that we become actual "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4), through union with Christ.

If the circulation of the blood be stopped in any limb, that limb will soon mortify; and in the same way, if we cease to receive of Christ's Spirit, our own spiritual death will ensue; if one of our members, a hand, or a foot, be poisoned, everything will depend upon our having a supply of pure blood in our system; if we have that, flowing through the body, it will purge away the poison and heal the wound; and in like manner, there is only one thing that can purge away the spiritual poison of our nature, and heal our spiritual wounds, and that is the regular inflow into our lives of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, working within us, repentance for past sin, creating sincere desires after holiness, and drawing our lives into fellowship with His own. And this receiving by faith of the heavenly life and nature of the Lord Jesus, is the *real* Holy Communion, of

which eating and drinking bread and wine are but a symbol and sign.

“The Lord Jesus, in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it and said, This is My body which is for you.” Not:—“This is My body which is broken for you,” but as it is correctly rendered in the revised:—“This is My body which is *for* you.” Christ’s body was not broken; the soldiers broke the legs of the malefactors who were crucified with Him. “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs; for these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken.” John xix. 36.

Bread and wine in the East are common forms of refreshment; when Abram returned weary from the battle, Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine. Gen. xiv. 18. It was the simple meal of the labourer, strengthening him for his daily toil; and so for the nourishment of our spiritual life, Christ, with the rich fulness of His nature, sets *Himself* before us, and says, My body is for you; that is, His heavenly nature is for us, His blood, His life, is for us to feed on day by day.

The words: “Do this in remembrance of Me,” were spoken at the last meal He took with His disciples, and it was as if He would say: I shall soon be gone from you, as far as My visible presence is concerned, but when you meet and break the bread, and drink the wine, remember *Me*, and that, “where two or

three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew xviii. 20. *Your Spiritual Rock* will be present, the fountain of spiritual life and strength for each of My members; do not therefore be dismayed by reason of your own weakness and fears; think of Me, and My power, and My love for you, and that I am near, to impart to you afresh of My heavenly nature and life; that just as this bread and wine become a veritable part of you, building up your physical nature, so I will impart My Spirit to you, incorporate My life with your life, and My nature with your nature, and thus sustain and nourish the life of your soul. I am the living Head of the Church, and the life shall flow down from the Head into all the members of the body. "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you. Because I live, ye shall live also." John xiv. 18, 19.

The whole resources of My heavenly nature are for you to receive and enjoy; so that filled with My *risen life*, you shall prevail and conquer; so that you will not have to meet the temptations and carry the burdens of life in your own strength, but in Mine; whenever you eat this bread, remember *Me*, remember it is the symbol of My Being, which is *for* you; Lo, I am with you always, even to the end.

Pondering these wonderful words, we should seek in the Communion Service to realise the truth that the Master is now with us, and seek to enter into the joy and blessing

of real communion with Him. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. x. 16 (Rev.). These words mean, that as we eat and drink the bread and wine, we are called to a fresh participation in the heavenly life and nature of the Lord Jesus. The Service is not simply a commemoration of the death of Christ, it is a Holy Communion. As Christ's people gather round the emblems, the real presence, the Spirit of the great Head of the Church is in the assembly, not *in* the bread and wine, but in the hearts of His people. "If any man hear My voice and open the door I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with Me." Rev. iii. 20.

If we gather to the Communion with faith in His word, really expecting to meet the Lord, the place of our assembly will be to us as the House of God and the very Gate of Heaven; and the sacrament will become a true means of grace, full of blessing, helping us to a deeper and fuller communion with Him, so that by a fresh impartation of His life to us, we may be spiritually renewed in our inward man. I do not say that this is the only means whereby we may commune with the Lord, it is our great privilege to do so whenever we seek Him in earnest prayer, but whatever other occasions may do for us, we are instructed, that, when we take this cup, we are called to a fresh Communion of the blood of Christ, and when we eat this

bread, we are called to a fresh Communion with His living personality; and gathering as fellow-believers for this great purpose, this season of Communion with Christ should be the most holy and blessed of all our gatherings as a Church. *At this time* we definitely seek and look to be filled anew with the Saviour's life; thus this sacred hour should be a foretaste of heaven upon earth, a tasting of the powers of the world to come. "He was known of them in the breaking of the bread." Luke xxiv. 35. Before the elements are taken, there should be the silent confession of any known sin to the Saviour who is now present in our midst, and supplication made to Him for forgiveness; and then as we take the elements, the earnest prayer shall ascend from the heart: Lord, impart to me *now* the reality of which these emblems speak, fill me and cleanse me with Thy life, let me now receive afresh of Thy heavenly nature; and so fill me with Thy Spirit, that I may know that Thou, Christ, art dwelling in me, the hope and evidence of eternal life.

"Here would I feed upon the bread of God;
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of
heaven;

Here would I lay aside each earthly load;
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song,
This is the heavenly table spread for me;
Here let me feast, and feasting, still prolong
The brief bright hour of fellowship with
Thee."

WHY

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Why Should a Fellow be Baptized ?

By

ARNOLD CLARK

Captain, 3rd London Company,
THE BOYS' BRIGADE
(Upton Chapel, Lambeth).

(25th thousand.)

TO
REV. T. POWELL, B.A., B.D.,
*to whom I owe much
in this and other ways—
and to
MY OWN B.B. FELLOWS,
who are the best chums possible,
this little book
is gratefully dedicated.*

A.S.C., Feb. 1930.

Why should a Fellow be Baptized ?

I HAVE sometimes said that I know nothing quite so thrilling as standing by the open Baptistry when any of my Boys' Brigade fellows are being baptized. Now, why do I feel like that? And why should a fellow be baptized at all? These are very reasonable questions, and I am now trying to set down five thoroughly good reasons, as clearly and simply as I can.

1. Because he has given his life to Jesus Christ.

We must remember right away that Baptism is the sign or symbol

of something that has already been done. A fellow is baptized to show quite clearly to other people that he has taken Christ into his life. That is why one feels so pleased, because one knows that he has done with his life the very best thing that he could. Look at it this way, and use yourself as an illustration. You have one life and one life only. Most of it lies ahead of you. You don't want to make a mess of it, but you do want to make the most of it. You give it to Christ, believing that He will draw out of it the best that lies in it, and that He will use your powers (large or small) in His service, for the benefit of others. You will then be seeking to do His will, and to be where He wants you, and, to use a business term, will be investing your life to the greatest advantage.

That is why I say that no fellow, —whatever he may succeed in

doing, at school, in exams., in sport, or in business—ever does better for himself than when he decides to hand his life over to Jesus Christ's keeping. And if you do not happen to have done so, stop now and think it over very carefully indeed, and pray about it very sincerely.

2. Because he is doing exactly what
Jesus did.

Surely it makes Baptism a very fine thing indeed when we remember that Jesus Christ Himself was baptized in this very way. And He was only a young man at the time. I feel sure that He had been a lively, jolly Boy, and, as a carpenter's apprentice, had been, to use a modern term, a real good sort—a thoroughly decent fellow. The Bible tells us that He grew in favour with God and with man, which clearly means that He was very popular with those around

Him—His chums and fellow-workers, and His family.

And then at the age of thirty, when He was ready to begin His ministry, He chose the method of Baptism as the sign that He was consecrating His life to the service of God, His Father. I honestly think it a very real privilege and honour to be able to do the same thing, and copy Him exactly in this way. Jesus was a Man, a Man every inch of Him, and no young fellow who thinks about it at all, can count it anything but a very manly thing to follow the example of such a great and manly Man, especially when we remember that He asked us to do so.

3. Because he is ready to give Christ his service, and may enjoy the honour of Church Membership.

Church Membership is a great privilege. I know that it means

some responsibilities, but what is there worth while that does not? Some fellows say they are not good enough to join the Church. Quite true! Neither am I—and neither is your Minister nor Superintendent, nor any one of your Deacons. No, we are all very human, but, thank God, His Church is made up, not of angels, but of human beings, and Jesus Christ, to use His own phrase, came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. So don't worry your head about that.

Of course there arises the question as to what a fellow can do, what work there is that he can put his hand to—and such a question needs careful thought. I do not know your particular Church, but I can think of things my own Boys' Brigade chaps are doing—some are Primary School teachers, others have classes in the Junior School.

Then there are old boys who have now become B.B. Officers and Life Boy Team Leaders (the equivalent, of course, in some Churches, to Scout and Cub masters). Others do registrar work, help with the Missionary collection, and so forth. The Christian Endeavour, Young Peoples' Fellowship, and the Baptist Missionary Society, all offer work which needs doing well, and which caters for all capabilities. Don't worry about the work—if you've given your life to Christ, be baptized and say so—join the Church, and then keep your eyes wide open and ask your Minister or School Superintendent or any one else you can think of, what jobs they have that you can do. Pray much about it, and having done so, watch the opportunities that come, and see in them the answer to your prayer.

4. Because he is nailing his colours to
the mast.

That is a tremendous help. There's nothing like being out and out. When in the Army during the War, I saw several really decent young men go astray just because they kept their convictions to themselves, and in so doing laid themselves open to temptation. Again and again when asked to go somewhere, or do something, which they knew was unwise, they yielded simply because they had not the pluck to be definite and say "No." Had they been true, and shown that they were trying to follow Christ, they might never have been asked, or, if asked, not been expected to accept. To quote a quaint old phrase—If you want to keep the Devil out, let him know that Christ is in!

Jesus Himself told us that we cannot serve both "God and

Mammon," and on another occasion, "He that is not with Me is against Me." There is no neutrality, and that is indeed a very solemn thought. If I am not actively on His side, He regards me as being on the other.

I fully realise that one hesitates to run the colours up, fearing one will perhaps dishonour them, and not live up to them. Remember, however, that the twelve men whom Jesus chose as His disciples were very human men, full of faults and far from perfect. He understood them as He understands us; we can but do our best with His help, and carry on.

5. Because of the pleasure it will give
Jesus Christ Himself.

After all, it is He Whom we confess when we are baptized. Do you think He looks on at a Baptismal Service unmoved? I

feel sure He does not. He told us that the angels were pleased over one sinner who repented—and I am quite certain that He is more than glad when a boy or young man publicly acknowledges Him, and thus enters His service. Think that over, and you will realise what a great privilege and honour Baptism is. I hope you will decide to make it your own.

I myself was baptized at the age of fifteen, and so far from regretting it, I am very thankful that I did not wait any longer. I sometimes tell fellows that if they come to Christ now, with a life of say fifty years ahead of them, they give Him a gift of fifty years, but that if they put it off until this time next year, they give Him only forty-nine years. You see, the gift diminishes in value, the longer you hold it back.

If you are in doubt, pray, and

pray earnestly. If you think that anyone can help you at all, go and ask outright, only be sure it is someone you can trust.

In some Churches it is possible to join the Church without being baptized. I do urge you not to do that; do not throw away one of the biggest privileges by a short cut of that description. Be out and out, seize the opportunity with both hands, and you will never regret it.

As a matter of fact, I believe you will be very happy. I remember one of my B.B. lads telling me that he never felt so happy in his life as when he was actually standing in the Baptistery. Some do look upon it as an ordeal, a fuss, something to shrink from; personally I do not see any need to do that; though even supposing there were, surely it is rather great to do it despite this feeling, because the more it costs us, the more we

are really giving to Christ in the doing of it.

There are many other things I could say, but these are to me some of the chief reasons why a fellow should be baptized. I most sincerely hope that you will realize the greatness of the call, and that God may lead you to respond to it. May He give you a long and happy life of Christian service.

WHY

should a

Girl

be

a

Christian?



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From the Publishers of this Booklet

Why Should a Girl be a Christian?

By

MARY B. DUNNING,

Ex-Captain of 2nd Luton Company,

THE GIRLS' LIFE BRIGADE

(Park Street Church, Luton).

(20th thousand)

Why Should a Girl be a Christian ?

*“Lo! as some innocent and eager maiden
Leans o’er the wistful limit of the world
Dreams of the glow and glory of the
distance——”.*

Yes, for this purpose God gave us imaginations, and so we dream of the years ahead—of advancement in learning, of promotion in business, of coming married happiness and responsibility, and many other things. Such dreaming is not an idle pastime. We picture to ourselves situations which we must approach with a mind already formed, and we anticipate opportunities that must be grasped with a determined will.

Amid the many vital interests that appeal to us is one that claims

to be supreme. It is something that touches the deepest springs of life and gives colour and direction to all our activities. It is real religion, and by that I mean the religion of Jesus.

Jesus somehow differs from every other great figure of the past. With the passing of the years others fade, more or less, but Jesus comes nearer, with increasing glory and relevance. Other men are a matter of opinion—Jesus is a matter of conscience. I feel at liberty to dismiss them if I wish, but I cannot dismiss Jesus with impunity. No one has ever done so. “And he went away sorrowful.” This was said of a very fine young fellow who would not obey the heroic call of Christ. It could be said of everyone who deliberately declines to follow Him. I think we never really question whether Jesus is right; our hesitancy and doubt rise when we consider whether we will do

what He has revealed as being so obviously and, I would say, beautifully right. For His goodness is always so winsome. He differs from others also in this, that He is the supreme consideration in every choice we make. We always take the Christian or the non-Christian way—and it matters so supremely which of the two we take, for Jesus never stands as an alternative to something good. If we ever crucify Him afresh, it is always in order to accept some modern Barabbas, for, think honestly, is there any good thing in life to which Jesus is opposed, *e.g.*, sport, education, friendship, public service, love? At the touch of Jesus, these all rise with new vigour and beauty. It was He who inspired the social service of Margaret Ethel Macdonald. Florence Nightingale's daring ministry was called out by Him, and it was Jesus who moved Mary Slessor to heroic devotion for darkest Africa, and, although it is

not often admitted, there are a thousand "unremembered acts of kindness and of love" which would never have been rendered but for the influence of our Lord.

This means then, that if I am to be frank with the world and with myself, I must decide what I am going to do with Jesus. He has moved the artist to produce works of wondrous beauty; He has inspired the musician to seraphic strains. Behind the beneficent institutions of the land is the generosity of hearts that He has touched, and when I ask humanity, "What think ye of Christ? Does He deserve the devotion of the whole life?"

"Saints, apostles, prophets,
martyrs,
Answer 'Yes.'"

And these are the authorities, for those who have no experience of Him have no right to speak.

In view of all this, we naturally

ask, "What about it?" This is a question that cannot be shelved. It is Judgment Day every time I think of Jesus—for I must be for or against Him. Other issues do not so arrest me. If I wonder whether or not I shall have a nice fur coat, my money, or lack of it, quickly settles that matter. If, in a dreamy moment, I wonder how I shall spend old age, my years or want of years, will remind me that the question is not urgent. But the call of Jesus is urgent, because the greatest issues hang upon my response to it, and there will never be a more convenient season for the right choice.

Then what does following Him really imply? It implies two things that are inseparable—the formation of the highest possible character, and a life-service for the Kingdom of God. It is the saving of life that would otherwise be lost, and the realisation of that life in service for other people.

We need not rack our brains about the problem of sin. What is more to the point is to hear our own hearts tell us that we have disappointed our better selves, that slumbering within us are impulses that can be gloriously creative if rightly controlled, but terribly destructive if they come to rule our life. We need not sigh and sob that we are miserable sinners, but we must frankly admit that if we accept Jesus as Lord of our life, He will save us from a great deal of moral waste, unhappy compromise, and poor achievement. For Jesus came into the world to make us, not bigots, nor kill-joys, but real men and women. He came to impart neither moral conceit nor sanctimonious airs, but life which is life indeed—for Jesus is at once Saviour and Lord. He comes to save our girlhood from all that would disfigure and weaken it, and obedience to His command is the only route to beauty and nobility of character.

I wish specially to talk frankly to a type of girl one frequently meets to-day, and among whom I must class myself. We feel we are here to live and to live fully. We have eyes to see, ears to hear, bodies to keep healthy. The Spirit of the Lord is upon us that we may enjoy a swim, a game of tennis, a good concert and a lovely sunset in addition to religious services. Yet, alas! I see girls like myself turn from Christianity. What they object to is Mrs. Grundy, but they turn away from Jesus. Frankly and earnestly I would appeal to these girls. Do you not see both the injustice you do to Jesus and the injury you do to yourselves by such action? Moreover, I sincerely believe that Jesus and the Church specially need such as you. He will spoil nothing good in us, but will make the best of all that is undeveloped in us. He is the ideal and strength of the noblest living.

Then let us presume that we will accept Jesus as our Saviour. We ask, "Why should a girl be baptised and join the Church?" Well, why should the bride want a ring? The ring is nothing without the love it ought to symbolise, but does not a true love crave a relevant expression? The ring can be described in terms of weight and metal and money. But the eye of love sees enclosed in that ring deep understanding, unquestioning faith, deathless loyalties, and love beyond price.

Baptism is the ring of the supreme attachment, not between two persons, but between the soul and Jesus, and He has expressed a preference for that symbol. I think that once we love Him we shall readily respect His wish, and admit our allegiance by our baptism.

Many people to-day flatter Jesus and ignore His Church. Truly the Church is not what it ought

to be, but then neither are its critics. Among the twelve men who first followed Jesus was a Judas, but because of him we do not despise the other eleven. The Christian Church is just a company of Christian people met together, unitedly to find the mind of Jesus and to do His will. Our Lord meant His followers to come together in that way. It was never His intention that men and women should take His salvation and then retire to enjoy it in isolation. He prayed that His followers might be one, and He frequently said He came into the world not to convert men into hermits but to found a Kingdom in which His followers would co-operate in serving Him. Where His followers are, there will He be also, and there is something of the presence of Jesus that we can never find outside His Church, and some of the service He requires from us can be rendered only through the Church. One can-

not doubt that it is the will of Jesus that His followers should join His Church.

I know what some of us feel about certain Churches. Their life lacks vision, enthusiasm and adventure. Sagacity and caution abound. What does this really imply? Is it not that the very kind of thing we miss in the Church is the kind of thing that only Christian youth can give? We cannot blame the aged for not giving it. Wisdom and prudence are their contribution, but initiative, idealism and adventure are the very things that we possess. In the lack of these in the Church, let us recognise Christ's call to us to join His Church and give to its life our distinctive gifts.

We need Jesus as our Saviour—so many of our best possibilities are lost till He realises them. We need Him as Lord. His own wondrous life constitutes His right

to our uttermost loyalty. When we have thus accepted Him, the Church pleads for all that we can bring to it, and let us recognise that its appeal to us for love and service comes not only from ministers and deacons, but from Him who "Loved the Church and gave Himself for it." Let us decide—and join.

Why Should I be Baptized ?

DR. J. C. CARLILE, C.H., C.B.E.



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Why Should I be Baptized ?

Believers should be baptized because their Lord commanded it.

“ ‘Go ye,’ He said, ‘therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.’ ”—Matt. xviii. 19.

The all-sufficient reason is, Jesus commanded it. Love delights to obey. “Whatever He saith unto you, do it,” that is the only safe way ; once we leave Christ’s word, there is no anchorage.

There is no authority for changing the command, or for putting something else in its place. There is no more justification for substituting sprinkling for immersion than there is for substituting “Mass” for the Lord’s Supper.

Believers should be baptized because their Lord set the example.

“He hath left us an example that we should follow in His steps.”

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him, but John forbade Him, saying, I have need to

be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, suffer it to be so now : *for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*”—Matt. iii. 13 to 15.

“He went up out of the water.”—Matt. iii. 16.

What is the use of singing “I will follow Jesus,” if we only follow Him in the things that please us?

Believers should be baptized because the early Church taught and practised it.

The Acts of the Apostles—the earliest record of church history—gives us many examples. The early disciples knew the mind of the Master. We accept the authority of the early Fathers, if the earliest, *i.e.*, those in the Acts, are put in evidence.

See the following passages : viii. 12 ; ix. 18 ; xvi. 30 to 33 ; xix. 5.

There is now no discussion as to the apostolic mode of baptism : it was immersion, the subjects of baptism were *always* believers. Upon the first point any standard dictionary of the Bible may be consulted. [The Prayer Book says the infant is to be dipped except in cases of sickness.] The proof of the latter is the fact that there is no mention of the baptism of others.

Believers should be baptized because it is a public confession of faith in Christ.

It is the badge He gave. It is taking our stand with Him. It is the symbol of our unity with Him. A cross it may be, but did He not say, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Whatever infant baptism is, it is not an intelligent confession of the faith of the baptized.

Believers should be baptized because it is the symbol of their consecration.

It is the dividing act between the self-life and the Christ life. This is the great plea in Romans vi., reckoning ourselves dead unto sin, and reverently and intelligently being baptized into His death. The past is severed from the present by His Cross, whereon He died for us, and His tomb, wherein we are one with Him in death.

Believers should be baptized because obedience is always best.

Salvation is in no way dependent upon baptism. "By grace are ye saved through faith." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." We are baptized, not to be made Christians, but because we are Christians.

When we see the light there is blessing in walking in it.

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